



FIRE SAFETY AND BURN PREVENTION

“Working” smoke alarms save lives

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One of the most important fire safety devices for the home is the smoke alarm. A smoke alarm is one of those amazing inventions that cost practically nothing and have the ability to save thousands of lives each year.

The primary job of a smoke alarm is to protect you and your family from fire by providing an early warning signal so all of you can escape safely. A smoke alarm is designed to detect and warn that silent, but deadly smoke is in the air. This is especially important should a fire occur at night while you are sleeping.

While 97 out of 100 homes may have a smoke alarm, more than 33 percent of these homes are unprotected because the smoke alarms don't work. When a smoke alarm fails to work, it is frequently because the batteries are missing. People often remove or disconnect batteries to prevent nuisance activation caused by bathroom steam or cooking



vapors. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home, including the basement, and smoke alarms should always be installed outside sleeping areas. Smoke alarms consist of two basic parts: a sensor to sense the smoke and a very loud electronic horn to wake people up.

It's important to regularly check your smoke alarms to make sure they are working properly. Typically a smoke alarm uses a 9-volt battery, a lithium battery or is directly wired to your household electricity. It's recommended that you change the batteries on your smoke alarms twice a year. An easy way to remember this is to change the batteries when clocks are changed each spring and fall, and never remove the batteries in your smoke alarms. You may not remember to put them back in.

Many hardware, home supply or general merchandise stores carry smoke alarms. If you don't know where to purchase one, call your local fire department and they will provide you with some suggestions. Some fire departments even offer smoke alarms for little or no cost.

Remember the following:

- Install only smoke alarms that have the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark. This mark tells you that the alarm has been evaluated according to nationally recognized safety requirements.

- One smoke alarm in the home is not enough. A smoke alarm should be installed on every level of the home including the basement.

- Smoke alarms should be placed, at minimum, within 15 feet of all sleeping areas.

Source: *nfp.org*

ACTIVITY

- ◆ Locate the smoke alarms in your home. Ask your parents when they last changed the batteries. Test them so everyone knows the sound of the alarm. Check the batteries with your parents and change them if needed.



DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ The top five days for home candle fires are Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, New Year's Eve and Halloween.

- ◆ There were an estimated 1.4 million fires reported in the U.S. during 2011 (an increase of 4 % from 2010) which resulted in \$11.7 billion in property damage.

- ◆ Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

- ◆ More than half of all cooking fire injuries occurred when people tried to fight the fire themselves.

- ◆ A fire department responded to a fire every 23 seconds in 2011.

Source: *nfp.org*

FIRE SAFETY QUIZ:



- Most smoke alarms use what kind of batteries?
a. type C
b. 9 volt
c. type AA
- You should change your smoke alarm batteries:
a. every five years.
b. once a year.
c. twice a year.
- Smoke alarms should be

installed:

- only in the kitchen.
- in the kitchen and bedroom.
- on every floor of your home.

- In many areas, smoke alarms are required by law to be installed in homes.



- True
B. False
- If smoke or flame is coming out of an electrical appliance, you should:
a. not touch the appliance.
b. unplug the appliance.

c. all of the above.

- Smoke alarms should not be located:

- on every floor of your home.
- near bedrooms.
- near air vents.

- It is recommended that emergency telephone number be listed by the telephone. What important address is commonly left off this list?

- local fire department.
- neighbor's address.
- home address.

- Since the 1990s home fires caused by candles has:

- doubled.
- tripled.
- quadrupled.

- As you leave a burning building, you should always leave the doors open.

- True
B. False

- Working smoke alarms in your home will more than double your chances of surviving in a fire.

- True
B. False



Answers: 1B, 2C, 3C, 4A, 5C, 6C, 7C, 8C, 9B, 10A.

FIRE SAFETY VOCABULARY

- ◆ **ashes** - the powdery residue of matter that remains after a fire.
- ◆ **embers** - the smoldering remains of a fire.
- ◆ **engulfed** - to enclose and surround completely; to swallow-up or overwhelm.
- ◆ **fire drill** - a practice exercise in the exit procedure to be followed in case of a fire.
- ◆ **ignite** - to set on fire.
- ◆ **smoke alarm** - an electronic fire alarm that is activated by the presence of smoke.
- ◆ **vapor** - a diffused matter, such as fumes or smoke, suspended in the air.



Fires can happen anywhere, and knowing what to do, is the key to surviving a fire emergency.

When there's a fire inside your school or home, you need to get out immediately. Since smoke from a fire can make it difficult to see, it's important to know the best way to exit the building.

The best way to be prepared for a fire is to have a plan before it even happens. Your plan should include fire drills. A fire drill can help you practice leaving your building quickly and safely. You should also know at least two ways to get out.

Many schools practice fire drills during the course of the school year. The fire alarm goes off, students line up in an orderly fashion and teachers escort them safely out of the building. Often local fire departments are on hand to observe and



and practiced a home fire escape plan. The majority of home fires occur when people are sleeping which emphasizes the importance of working smoke alarms.

It's important to know that just a small amount of planning can make a huge difference in case of an emergency. The following fire drill and escape plan tips apply to both home and work.

- Develop a fire escape plan which identifies

provide instruction along the way.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, only 23 percent of households have planned

two ways out of each room or work area.

- At home, install smoke alarms on every level and outside each sleeping area.
- Establish a meeting place outside.

- If smoke alarms or fire alarm systems activate, immediately proceed to the nearest exit, do not take time to collect personal belongings. If smoke is encountered, proceed to the secondary exit. If you must exit through smoke get low and under the smoke.

- Practice your escape plan or conduct a fire drill.
- Never go back inside!

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Make a list of at least three things you should do when you hear the fire alarm go off.
- ◆ Set aside time with your family to discuss what each of you should do in a fire emergency - and practice it.

Know how to get out safely and practice



Fire prevention message

Understanding the importance of fire safety and burn prevention is a message everyone, young and old, should observe.

Each Monday in October, this page will focus on fire safety and burn prevention information sponsored by the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance. Thousands of students throughout Illinois will learn more about how to prevent a fire from occurring.

Fire deaths and injuries can be prevented.

For information on IFSA's Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Program, contact:
www.ifsa.org
email: jfsi@ifsa.org
Helpline: (847) 400-4864